

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and a great honour for me to open this two day International Symposium devoted to 'New Methods in Biorheology'. I would like to welcome, on behalf of the organizing committee and in my own name, all the personalities who are attending this meeting and extend specific greetings to my friend Professor Copley, to Professor Silberberg and also to Professor Witte. Unfortunately they are retained in Baden-Baden for the preparation of the 5th International Congress. They accepted to act as the Honorary Committee of this Symposium. Without them our Symposium could never have taken place. I would also like to excuse Professor Streiff, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Nancy who is unable to be with us to-day. Further I should like to thank the Medical and Biological engineering department at the French Research Ministry for sponsoring this meeting and also thank all the firms who have contributed to the material organization of the symposium.

It is very gratifying to see the growing interest in biorheology among researchers from different disciplines. This interest stems from many important studies during the past twenty years and, particularly, during the past decade. But if Biorheology is to be an effective stimulant, it is essential that all experimental data should be defined scrupulously, both in vivo and in vitro.

In research on biological media and on living beings, the experimental data are quite frequently either practically or totally useless for any theoretical interpretation. This is due in part because the experimental procedure applied is often much too rudimentary for describing all the aspects of the phenomenon observed ; but it is not unusual to find that it is the significance of the experimental data that is at fault. It is extremely difficult to extract significant and reproducible experimental criteria from biological systems, which is why the validity of measurements is sometimes extremely questionable. Before interpreting data we must ensure that the technique used is not a victim of GIRO disease (Garbage in : Rubbish out). Indeed, in some cases it is possible to lose sight of the conditions required for a value to be measurable, and one of the major problems the researcher has to contend with is that of detecting which of the possible variables are effectively measurable.

One of the aims of this Symposium is to discuss the main methods now used both in experimental and clinical Biorheology. On reading the abstracts it is particularly striking to note how experimental concepts have evolved. Indeed, about half of the communications presented concern microrheology. This evolution is extremely interesting if all branches of biorheology are to be profitably developed, as it is most important to be able to construct theoretical approaches based on the molecular and structural characteristics of the systems studied. I hope that this Symposium, which is the satellite symposium of the 5th International Congress of Biorheology in Baden Baden, will be profitable to us all.